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Donor Assistance in the Transparency and Accountability Movement

By Davin O'Regan



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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report presents findings from a series of participatory workshops and more than seventy in-depth interviews with social movement actors and organizations on transparency and accountability issues in Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine. The report was supported by USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.

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Cover photo: A protester walks past rows of placards during an anti-corruption demonstration in downtown Nairobi. (Photo by Ben Curtis/AP)

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Summary



Bilateral donor agencies and private foundations are increasingly interested in extending their support to social movement actors to supplement these actors' demonstrated ability to advance policy reform. But what is the impact of such training and funding? Do these resources improve the ability of social movement organizations to advance policy reforms and mobilize grassroots support? Or do they burden social movement actors with new bureaucratic requirements, limits on tactics and activities, or deficits of popular legitimacy and credibility?

To better assess these impacts, three participatory workshops were held and more than seventy in-depth interviews conducted with representatives of transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption social movement organizations in Nigeria, Kenya, and Ukraine in 2017 and 2018. Respondents consistently reported that foreign funding substantially influenced their activism, often in ways that impeded effectiveness.

This situation was less apparent in the analysis of survey data, however, and respondents reported that some challenges of foreign funding were manageable. Foreign funding also generated competitive dynamics. Some activists reported that they were persistently excluded from foreign grant opportunities, and this exclusion caused resentment of major recipients of foreign grants.

These findings imply an opportunity for donors to provide more direct and less conditional funding support to movement actors. More flexible support will allow individual activists and movement organizations to scale up their work, adapt to changing circumstances, and seize opportunities while freeing them from the project-based and earmarked grants that currently constrain their approach.

Likewise, more funding that targets newer and small activists will allow for more coalition building and minimize some resentments that percolate in the transparency and accountability movement. Trainings and convenings that bring together more established movement organizations with newer organizations and activists on a level playing field may also support the emergence of more organic collaboration and partnerships.



Halyna Yanchenko, head an anti-corruption nongovernmental organization, has called for Ukrainian lawmakers suspected of corruption by the General Prosecutor's Office to be stripped of their parliamentary immunity. (Photo by Valentyn Ogirenko/Reuters)

Background

Rather than engage solely with specific government ministries or political leadership to underwrite reforms or institutional initiatives, donor governments and, increasingly, private foundations have sought to strengthen citizens' ability to advance transparency and accountability reforms from the bottom up.

Corruption is among the greatest challenges affecting countries across the globe and routinely identified as a top concern by citizens in cross-national surveys. One poll of eighteen- to thirty-five-year-olds from 186 countries commissioned in 2017 by the World Economic Forum found that “government accountability and transparency/corruption” was the most frequently selected “serious issue” affecting respondents’ countries, with 46 percent of those surveyed picking it ahead of poverty, violent conflict, climate change, crime, and other national challenges.¹ These results largely reinforce those from other surveys, such as one from the Pew Research Center in 2014 conducted across twenty countries in which corruption was the second most commonly identified “very big problem.”² Regularly conducted surveys in Africa and Latin America have found that majorities of respondents consistently perceive corruption to be high and that governments are unable to handle or reverse the challenge.³ The persistence of these problems has broad implications for economic development and potentially for political stability and violent conflict as well.⁴

These concerns have not gone entirely unnoticed by policymakers in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, who increasingly try to emphasize anti-corruption efforts in their development and security engagements abroad. Two lines of effort have generally been pursued. First, some initiatives have sought to strengthen state institutions to better detect,



Demonstrators take part in a January 2019 march in Guatemala City, Guatemala, to protest against President Jimmy Morales's decision to end the mandate of the UN-backed anti-corruption commission. (Photo by Luis Echeverria/Reuters)

deter, and punish corruption primarily by creating new laws and agencies with specialized functions to tackle bribery, pay-to-play, contractual fraud, budgetary diversion, and other forms of malfeasance and abuses of power. Examples include the nearly one hundred countries that have passed access to information legislation since 2000 and the dozens of governments that have established or expanded dedicated anti-corruption agencies.⁵

A slightly different, though often complementary, approach is to support the independent efforts of citizens and civil society in affected countries. Rather than engage solely with specific government ministries or political leadership to underwrite reforms or institutional initiatives, donor governments and, increasingly, private foundations have sought to strengthen citizens' ability to advance transparency and accountability reforms from the bottom up. Citizens in some countries have shown that they are eager to engage in collective efforts to compel more openness and accountable performance from their government and leaders. This is most visible

in recent mass protest campaigns in Guatemala, Burkina Faso, Ukraine, and elsewhere in which corruption was a primary rallying cry as demonstrators successfully pushed for changes in national leadership.⁶ Less dramatic—and perhaps often overlooked—activist victories have similarly sought to pressure governments to improve transparency and accountability, such as efforts to clarify the use of constituency development funds in Kenya, new online procurement tools created by activists in Ukraine, and the use of social audits to improve sanitation services in Cape Town, South Africa.⁷

These and other recent examples have motivated a deep interest in supporting such bottom-up citizen efforts and, more specifically, social movements. Indeed, within policy and programmatic debates over how to move the reform needle in fragile states, social movements are increasingly embraced as uniquely influential contributors. They are viewed as simply doing things that traditional actors do not: “Advances toward more inclusive politics are most often accomplished by citizen-centered

organizations and movements, not by the advocacy campaigns undertaken by professional NGOs.”⁸ Based on this belief, donors seeking to advance real institutional and legal reforms in other countries are best served by adopting a “movement mindset.”⁹ These expectations seem to conform to broader empirical findings on the impact of social movements, which have been found to consistently exert influence on policy and government behavior, whether the issue is labor issues, women’s or civil rights, environmental policy, or democratization. In a systematic review of studies of social movements, roughly 70 percent were found to wield strong political and policy influence, and most others modest or weak influence.¹⁰ When organized and mobilized, citizens are often able to shape political change and policy reform.

Can donors tap into the influence of social movements to advance transparency and accountability reform? Does foreign support, specifically funding and training, help these movement actors in their efforts to combat corruption? To better understand these dynamics, a series of participatory workshops were held and in-depth interviews conducted with social movement actors and organizations that focus on transparency and accountability issues in three countries: Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine. The focus was to learn and document how activists operated in these contexts, and specifically how foreign funding and training programs influenced their efforts to advance their transparency and accountability agendas. That is, what is the effect of various forms of foreign support on the success of social movements focused on transparency and accountability?¹¹ This report summarizes the findings and their programmatic and research implications. Findings are mixed. Workshop participants and interviewees virtually all agreed that foreign funders often influenced the types of goals and activities that recipients adopted in their work and, by implication, constrained their abilities to pursue certain aims or courses of action. Additional data from surveys, however, suggest that foreign funding may be having less of an influence on the selection of objectives and tactics than participants perceived. Although some interviewees and

workshop participants expressed some concern that receiving foreign funding may undermine their legitimacy and credibility, and by extension, mobilization potential among their compatriots and constituents, the concern was a minimal one and framed as manageable.

Consistent with other research on foreign funding, foreign-funded participants and interviewees were found to have engaged in mobilization less frequently than activists and organizations that relied more heavily on domestic financing. This divergence was justified as a strategic choice in which foreign-funded groups opted for more specialized and costly activities, such as direct advocacy or litigation, that required less popular mobilization. By contrast, activists and groups that lacked certain technical skills and resources focused on community engagement and popular participation—and this was framed as their comparative advantage. Last, foreign funding was somewhat of a divider. Once an activist or organization received foreign funding, they entered a somewhat exclusive network of peers among whom collaboration and interaction were common and organic. However, independent activists and other domestically financed organizations found themselves effectively blocked from this network, at most being included when they became subcontractors for foreign-funded activists and organizations. This stratification of activism generated a sense of unfair competition and resentment that may inhibit more productive collaboration and scaling of efforts.

Together, these findings imply that although funders do influence how recipients use funds and may divert them from certain objectives and tactics, the effect may be less than is sometimes feared. Nor does it appear that funding and training irreversibly compromise the popular legitimacy of recipient organizations and activists among in-country constituents and beneficiaries. Still, donors do face challenges in extending support to newer, smaller, and less experienced activists. Currently, such actors appear to resent their reliance on collaboration with established organizations that are recurrent recipients of foreign support.

What Are Social Movements?



Social movements are broad, have fluid boundaries, and are constantly evolving. They have many participants, from individuals to various types of organizations, and persist even if they are not presently active in the streets or grabbing news headlines. In their most reducible and distinguishable form, social movements are a change- or reform-oriented vision shared across some portion of a society. To provide greater analytic tractability to such an ambiguous phenomenon, this discussion draws on the framework provided by John McCarthy and Mayer Zald's resource mobilization theory of social movements, which loosely applies concepts from the study of industrial organization to clarify social movement analysis.¹² In this approach, all social movements in a society make up the social movement sector, and within the sector are specific social movement industries categorized by the issue, belief, or goal they seek to advance. In this research, that shared change-oriented vision or belief is an emphatic and widespread demand for greater government transparency and accountability. Hence the focus is on the impact of the transparency and accountability movement, which is a distinct social movement industry.

Within each social movement industry are social movement organizations (SMOs), formal entities that broadly have and work to implement the same vision or goal, though their precise methods and policy platforms may differ. Many SMOs often make up a social movement industry; rarely does one organization embody an entire movement. For context, McCarthy and Zald refer to the US civil rights movement as an example of a social movement industry and social movement organizations such as the NAACP, Congress of Racial Equality, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, among others, as its operative components. McCarthy and Zald and others have used

this analytic frame or map to theorize about competition and coordination between SMOs, how they mobilize and activate beneficiaries and supporters to exert influence, and how social movement industries evolve. From the perspective of an external actor such as a bilateral donor or private foundation, this framework should make clear that grants or training programs are only rarely provided to a social movement per se, but rather to discrete elements of a movement, such as a single activist, one organization, or a cohort of organizations.

Since it was first proposed in the late 1970s, the resource mobilization framework has been criticized for overlooking informal and grassroots entities.¹³ Others characterize its focus on formal, professional organizations as counterproductive. These arguments depict formal SMOs as an indirect method of cooptation that disarms and demobilizes social movements rather than as their central mobilizing force.¹⁴ This critique mirrors more recent condemnation of the “NGO-ization” of advocacy campaigns and activists in developing countries. Although not meant to generalize about all nongovernmental organizations, the NGO-ization argument suggests that many NGOs may serve merely as an informal method of social control that dampens demands for political transformation by channeling them through largely anodyne activities and programs.¹⁵ Another common, related criticism is that because many rely on fundraising from foreign benefactors, NGOs are disconnected from the constituents they purportedly intend to advocate for, protect, and serve. For instance, a study of forty voluntary organizations in Pakistan found that those that receive foreign funding tend to have no sustained membership base of Pakistanis.¹⁶

A focus on organizations suits our research. Formal, legally registered entities such as NGOs are a

primary—though by no means only—recipient of funding that bilateral donors and private foundations support, whether for democracy, human rights, or anti-corruption agendas. Registration by advocacy and developmental NGOs is required by many developing countries for tax and legal purposes, including to ensure that anti-money laundering and counterterrorism financing standards are met. For these and other reasons, foreign donors find it more difficult to engage more autonomous and informal grassroots activists and typically work through established, professional organizations. Still, external funders such as Frontline Defenders, CSO Lifeline, Freedom House, and some private foundations work to extend financial support to individuals, though many of these tend to be short-term urgent grants for immediate security problems and some still require registration as an eligibility criterion. For these reasons, this research remained mindful of the roles of both formal organizations and informal grassroots manifestations of the transparency and accountability movement.

Social movements and the organizations and activists that they comprise matter because of their ability to exert social, political, and policy influence. They typically do so in three ways. First, through rallies, letter-writing campaigns, press conferences, press appearances, and other tactics that garner popular attention, they are able to set and shape the policy agenda as well as directly persuade political leaders and elites to adopt reforms. These and similar tactics can also work more indirectly, gradually fostering broader societal support for a movement's vision and building moral pressure on citizens and elites to internalize a movement's outlook. For example, previous research has argued that changes to cultural practices and perceptions of the treatment of women are in part the result of how women's movement leaders and core activists modeled appropriate and nonsexist language, thinking, and behavior.¹⁷ Similar efforts have been attempted around anti-corruption issues, such as with the 5th Pillar movement in India that sought to build a national culture of civic responsibility and "intolerance of graft."¹⁸

Second, some movements work through institutional channels. Social movements can provide electoral endorsements or direct support to candidates and officials that share or support their policy preferences. Senegal's incumbent President Abdoulaye Wade lost his bid for a third term in 2012 partly because the protest movement *Y'en a marre* mobilized youth and urban opposition to his reelection.¹⁹ Muhammadu Buhari's victory in Nigeria's 2015 presidential contest, the country's first alternation of political power by the ballot, also benefited from relatively robust support from a broad array of anti-corruption civil society campaigners.²⁰ The India Against Corruption movement that emerged in 2011 to push for the adoption of several anti-corruption initiatives, including a stronger ombudsman, eventually rallied to support a number of candidates for the Delhi state assembly, resulting in strong majorities that helped pass several accountability reforms.²¹ Beyond elections, social movements can seek to directly develop legislative reforms or shape their implementation. This process can be slow, involving legal or litigation strategies, developing legislative proposals, and serving on oversight committees and boards, among other political and technocratic maneuvers. Politics often become central as movement actors seek to recruit support from inside state institutions: "For a movement to be influential, state actors need to see it as potentially facilitating or disrupting their own goals."²²

Third, when opponents are more recalcitrant and resistant to reform, social movements can seek to generate costs and disruption nonviolently through mass protest or non-cooperation such as boycotts and strikes.²³ These strategies were on full display in the successful anti-incumbent campaigns in Guatemala in 2015, in Burkina Faso in 2014, and in Ukraine in 2013–14, but have also been used to influence oil subsidy programs in Nigeria, controversial anti-corruption laws in Romania, and the adoption and implementation of access to information laws in India.²⁴ A movement's use of disruption and persuasion is often a function of its ability to mobilize citizen participation and support, but working through institutional channels may depend relatively more on technocratic and political skills.

Why Does Funding and Training for Social Movements Matter?



Social movements are often resource poor. They are fueled by donations of money, in-kind services, and voluntary efforts from their beneficiaries and adherents, many of whom are politically and economically marginalized and struggle with resource constraints themselves. This weakness may be compounded in underdeveloped countries. Grants from foreign donors, then, can serve as a windfall that opens many opportunities. Information campaigns can be expanded and sustained over a longer period. Staff can become full-time salaried employees, or new skills may be acquired that allow organizations to increase their efficiency and productivity or potentially innovate new approaches. Organizations may be able to delve into more technical and technocratic activities, such as data collection and analysis, litigation, or the development of language for legislative bills. Foreign funding and training can support recipients' efforts to expand their work, become more productive, or develop and employ new tactics.

Of course, there is no such thing as a free lunch, and this may be true with grants, financial support, and training from foreign funders. Foreign funding for NGOs and other recipients has been criticized for being overly prescriptive, directly and indirectly compelling recipients to adopt goals they would otherwise eschew. NGOs in Cambodia, the Philippines, Lebanon, and elsewhere, for example, have found themselves adapting their issue focus to keep up with the shifting priorities of their foreign benefactors.²⁵ Separately, donor-funded organizations in Nicaragua have been found to adopt less radical ideas and focus more on short-term outcomes and projects to sustain foreign funding.²⁶ Funds

may thus merely professionalize a social movement organization by cajoling it to adopt anodyne activities and efforts. Relatedly, foreign funding for advocacy can be politically sensitive, generating fears among donors and governments in recipient countries that such funding is not just supporting a broader discourse so much as intervening in sensitive political matters, including who should be in power. This can generate perverse, countervailing incentives in which a foreign funder wants to support in-country SMOs to advance political reform, but in a way that avoids political sensitivities so that they can maintain their future access. Recipients of such funding also want to ensure that they can continue their work. As a result, on-the-ground programs are designed to avoid politically sensitive subject matter to ensure continued foreign funding as well as avoid antagonizing domestic authorities.²⁷

Whether funds are earmarked for specific projects or provided as core or institutional support that recipients can spend with greater autonomy may exacerbate such problems.²⁸ Increasingly, a greater emphasis on core support is viewed as critical to unlocking social movement flexibility to react to specific and unexpected political developments to advance an agenda or mobilize support. Such flexibility is also thought to be necessary so that social movement actors can tap into their deeper knowledge of a local context. Reporting requirements can also inhibit recipients of foreign funds. The need to generate frequent reports that provide detailed and corroborated accounts of how funds are used and contribute to outcomes represent opportunity costs for movement actors.²⁹ A focus on mobilization, advocacy,



A majority of Nigerians believe they risk retaliation or other consequences when they report incidents of corruption. Anti-corruption activists and their organizations can help encourage safe reporting. (Photo by Akintunde Akinleye/Reuters)

and social change competes with—and often loses to—bureaucracy and paper shuffling.

Foreign funding may also diminish the legitimacy of recipients. One logic behind providing funding to local NGOs is that they can advance a particular aim or goal in a more culturally resonant and legitimate manner.³⁰ The acceptance of foreign funding, even if provided as core support, may directly undermine the advantages

of this local legitimacy. Whether true or not, prospective constituents or beneficiaries of a social movement may no longer perceive an organization or activist as representing their shared interests and needs but rather suspect that a foreign agenda is subtly being advanced. Prospective constituents and adherents may question the motives and intentions of mobilizing organizations that receive funding from foreign governments or private foundations.

Research Approach



The question driving this report—what the impact is of foreign support for the success of social movements focused on transparency and accountability—is ambitious. It poses a range of conceptual and methodological challenges, from identifying the correct level of analysis, to selecting appropriate measures of variation in transparency or accountability, to devising a feasible sampling frame to recruit social movement actors.³¹ To overcome these challenges, this report focuses on just three countries and takes a more inductive and qualitative approach. This approach aligned with an early decision to emphasize participation and inclusion over a systematic evaluation, specifically, interactive workshops and in-depth interviews for data collection.

Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine were selected as focus countries because they have certain broad features in common. Moderate democratic contestation is found in each country, yet some government interference in civil society is as well. In other words, in each country social movements may be able to advance reforms amid comparable institutional openness, but activists still face headwinds from the global “closing space” phenomenon. At the macro level, corruption is similarly severe in all three. In its 2017 corruption perceptions index, Transparency International ranked Kenya at 143, Nigeria at 148, and Ukraine at 130. Each country is also a frequent destination of bilateral, multilateral, and private foundation support for civil society groups and individual activists. Over the last decade, tens of millions of dollars have been directed to civil society initiatives and organizations in these countries. To be sure, these countries also have important socioeconomic, demographic, and other differences that likely shape both how movement actors operate and how

funders and trainers seek to engage them. In Ukraine, for example, a government was toppled following mass protests in 2014, dramatically reshaping the interests and priorities of international actors operating in the country as well as forging a new generation of activists eager to push their government for reforms. Similar events have not occurred in Kenya and Nigeria, though similar unique events and factors of those countries may also influence how activists, organizations, and their prospective foreign supporters engage. In the end, these findings are limited in their relevance to contexts similar to Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine, and may be potentially influenced by differences across these countries as well.

The participatory approach also shaped work in each of these contexts. Unlike a systematic impact evaluation, it involved reaching out to a broad array of nongovernmental groups and activists and simply engaging them in joint critical reflection about their work. This in turn entailed a two-day workshop with twelve to fifteen representatives of various nongovernmental groups or individual activists in each of the three countries. In addition, in each country one-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted with twenty to twenty-five individuals from one of four profiles:

- individual activists or representatives of organizations that have received external foreign funding or training support;
- similar activists or organizational representatives that have not received such support;
- current or former civil servants or politicians who have been the target of social movement activism; or
- neutral key informants such as local academics, researchers, or journalists.

Each country is also a frequent destination of bilateral, multilateral, and private foundation support for civil society groups and individual activists. Over the last decade, tens of millions of dollars have been directed to civil society initiatives and organizations in these countries.

The inclusion of activists and organizations that rely exclusively on domestic resources provides a useful basis of comparison against the claims of those participants and interviewees who have received foreign support.³² In addition, key informant and state-based perspectives offer a way of corroborating or comparing understandings of what impact social movements may be having or the influence of foreign support.

This approach introduces many biases and limitations into the analysis. First is that the impact of funding or training for social movements on government transparency or accountability cannot be isolated. Moreover, recipients of foreign funding have an obvious interest to claim that such support is essential to their impact, and that their influence on the state is substantial. Even if respondents and participants are forthright, they still may not be best placed to assess the impact of their work. To a certain extent, an approach that favors participation over other research design considerations is akin to a self-evaluation. Still, we sought to elevate and privilege the perspectives of many individuals in these countries that dedicate themselves to advancing transparency and accountability in difficult circumstances. By dint of their position and their work, they have a unique perspective on the impact of foreign funding.

Both the workshop agenda and semi-structured interview protocol focused on four central themes: examples of immediate goals and recent successes related to government transparency and accountability, the activities and tactics used, whether and how citizens were mobilized to participate in and support efforts, and experiences in collaborating with peers.³³ Within each of these themes, workshop participants and interviewees were asked how foreign funding or training influenced or might influence their approach to these areas. Specific definitions of these themes were

not provided, allowing participants to offer their own understanding of these concepts through iterative discussions.³⁴ The workshop involved various interactive exercises intended to stimulate collaborative reflection about how activists are advancing transparency and accountability, their impact, and what role, if any, foreign funding and training had on their work. In some respects, these workshops served as extended or interlinked focus group exchanges, each ninety-minute workshop session functioning as one focus group discussion. Some participants in the workshop also knew one another and spent time socializing in the evenings and between sessions. At the end of the workshop, participants often expressed an interest in reconvening in similar formats in the future. The interview protocol involved more in-depth discussion of similar subject matter. Interviewees were asked to speak broadly about their experiences related to these themes, and then asked to assess counterfactually how these experiences would differ had they not had access to foreign funding or relevant training or what they might do with more such foreign support.

Actors and organizations for the workshop and interviews were selected from an initial list of prospects gleaned from a review of funding data for Nigeria, Kenya, and Ukraine from 2009 to 2013 related to “strengthening civil society” initiatives in the AidData 3.0 data set as well as from annual reports from the National Endowment for Democracy and five other private foundations: MacArthur, Ford, Open Society, Hewlett, and Omidyar.³⁵ Numbers of recipients, mostly organizations, ranged from ninety in Ukraine, to eighty-seven in Nigeria, to eighty in Kenya. Because most of these initiatives do not explicitly mention transparency or accountability, groups that worked on broad-based governance, human rights, or other issues were also considered. Country experts then

reviewed these lists to identify which organizations were still active, with which connections were already in place, and which might be more willing and engaged in the workshop format. In-country researchers also participated in the selection and later conducted most of the interviews and composed reports of the workshop exchanges.

After organizations that received external funding were identified, prospective participants and interviewees that did not were identified using a snowball procedure. First, preliminary scoping interviews were conducted by telephone with in-country representatives of bilateral and private foundation donors. Interviewees were asked what activists or organizations they were not funding but found intriguing. Workshop planning also involved asking participants from foreign-funded organizations whether they had peers or knew of other civil society, nongovernmental, or similar organizations that drew resources exclusively from domestic sources. These approaches rarely produced any names. In fact, during a workshop session in one of the countries, none of the fourteen participants could name an activist, grassroots organizer, nongovernmental organization, or civil society leader that did not use foreign funding.

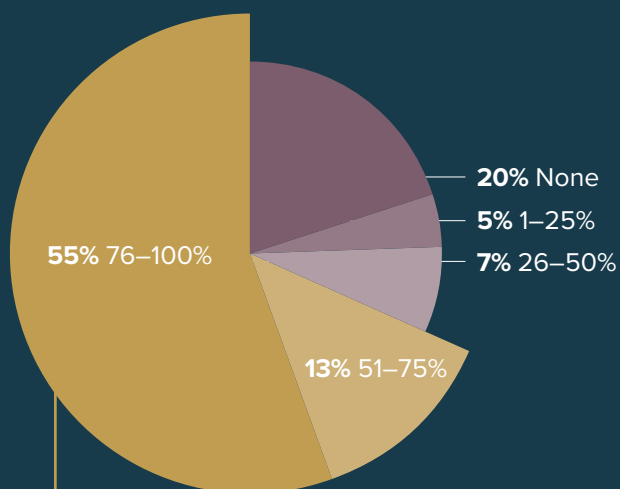
When these approaches did not yield good candidates, in-country researchers turned to their own networks and knowledge to identify and reach out to unfunded activists and movement organizations. Finally, religious or church leaders who advocated for policy reforms and labor union representatives were approached because these groups tend to have large domestic membership bases that contribute resources. These last two efforts yielded a few independent activists or representatives of organizations that were domestically funded. Most workshop participants and interview subjects, however, worked for organizations that drew heavily from bilateral, multilateral, or private foundation funders for financial support (see figure 1). The difficulty in finding domestically financed activists

and movement organizations is troubling and suggests possible limits to the organically rooted and sustainable nature of work on transparency and accountability issues in these contexts. The results may also be a consequence of shortcomings in the recruitment approach. It also raises issues of the comparability of the experiences of organizations that receive foreign support and those that do not. They may be systematically different, and divergences in how they recount their work and experiences may be a result of such differences rather than due to whether they receive foreign funding or training.

Before the workshops and interviews, all participants and interviewees were asked to complete short written questionnaires to provide basic information about their history of activism and foreign funding and training. A total of eighty-five participants and interviewees completed the questionnaires, which were not administered to targets or key informants. Responses revealed variation in the experiences of participants and interviewees (see figure 2). Those in Kenya and Nigeria tended to have worked for longer, whereas the majority in Ukraine became involved in activism only after the Euromaidan protests of 2013 and 2014. Participants were also asked at what level of government they targeted their work: national, state-provincial-county, or local-municipal. Most reported more than one level of authority (see figure 3). Ukrainian participants were perhaps somewhat more focused, in that fewer selected multiple levels and more focused their activism at the subnational level. Meanwhile, more Nigerian participants focused on national than on subnational activism.

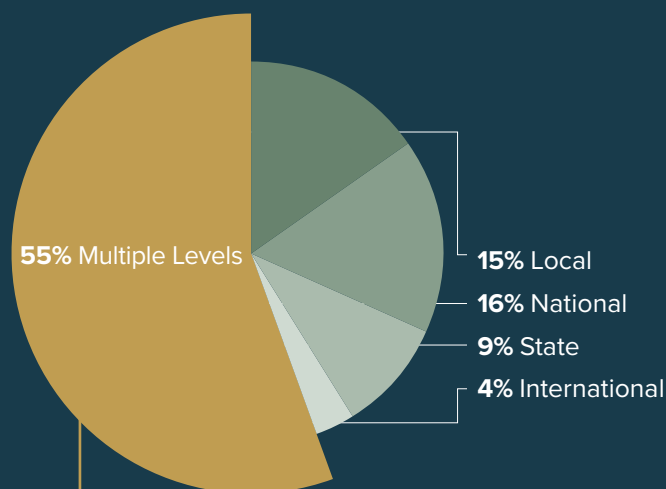
Whether participants and interviewees perceived their work as related to or affiliated with a social movement was important. Everyone was therefore asked to select the best descriptor of the organization or entity where they engaged in activism (see figure 4). The options, among which multiple selections could be made, included NGOs, grassroots organizations, advocacy organization, social movement organization,

Figure 1. Level of Foreign Funding As a Proportion of Annual Budget



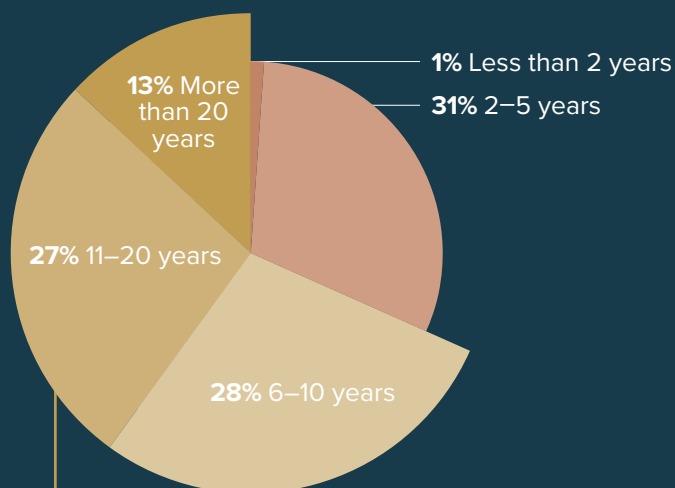
68% of workshop participants and interview subjects work for organizations that receive more than half of their funding from foreign sources.

Figure 2. Level of Engagement of Participants/Interviewees



55% of workshop participants and interviewees work for organizations that engage with multiple levels of authority.

Figure 3. Experience of Participants/Interviewees in Activism



68% of workshop participants and interviewees have six or more years of experience in activism.

Figure 4. Type of Organization Where Activism Takes Place



Of the 85 organizations represented, 49 were described by workshop participants and interviewees as NGOs. (Note: respondents were allowed to select more than one type.)



A protester wears a "Knock Out Corruption" headband as she prepares to march during an anti-corruption demonstration in downtown Nairobi on December 1, 2015. (Photo by Ben Curtis/AP)

or other. Respondents overwhelmingly self-identified their work as being with NGOs, and secondarily with grassroots and SMOs. Differences by country in how respondents self-identified were minimal, save a slightly larger proportion of Kenyans selecting grassroots and Ukrainians selecting SMOs. The latter may again reflect the recency of the Euromaidan protest wave in 2013 and 2014.

Does this mean these organizations do not constitute a movement? Although many participants and interviewees more readily identify as NGOs, their work still relates to social movements and social movement theory. Previous analyses of the impacts of social movements have incorporated organizations and activists engaging in a wide range of activities, "not only extrainstitutional action such as protest marches and civil disobedience, but also lobbying, lawsuits, and

press conferences."³⁶ In other words, many advocacy NGOs adopt and use social movement repertoires to advance social, political, and policy reforms.³⁷ Indeed, although they have been critical of typical donor-NGO relationships and expectations, scholars have also questioned the exclusion of advocacy NGOs from social movement analyses, "even though these organizations do the same things, and often in the same places, as the social movement organizations of the Global North."³⁸ Many NGOs focus on humanitarian response or development issues as opposed to explicit political matters. Others—including those involved in this research—are involved in advancing various reforms and influencing state behavior. In this light, their work can be evaluated from a social movement frame, and many of these organizations contribute to change-oriented social movement aims, including those of transparency and accountability.

Data and Analysis

The following review of the workshop and interview material is organized around the four previously identified themes: goals and successes, tactics and activities, mobilization and popular legitimacy, and collaboration. The views and perceptions of workshop participants and interviewees are discussed and cross-referenced, and additional data from the questionnaire and other surveys analyzed.

RECENT SUCCESSES AND INTERMEDIATE GOALS

The substance of both the interviews and participatory workshops started with a focus on outcomes. Participants and interviewees were asked to discuss the transparency and accountability successes they had observed in their countries as well as their intermediate and longer-term goals. The aim was twofold. First was to gain a sense of how social movement actors conceptualized preferred transparency and accountability outcomes. Second was to learn how foreign support might be shaping intermediate goal formation.

Most respondents identified some recent positive transparency and accountability policy developments in their country, but all were displeased with the extent and implementation of such reforms. In Nigeria, the 2011 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) was frequently identified as the country's most notable recent reform. Several interviewees in Kenya and Ukraine also identified recent changes to access to information laws passed there in 2016 and 2014, respectively. In Kenya, the improvement mentioned most often was the new constitution in 2010, particularly its provisions on integrity and ethics for public officials. Most interviewees from Ukraine identified the creation of online procurement and government contracting portals such

as ProZorro and DoZorro as well as new anti-corruption institutions. These institutions include the National Agency for Prevention of Corruption, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, and the High Anti-Corruption Court, all of which were established after the Euromaidan protests of 2013 and 2014. In general, Ukrainian participants and interviewees appeared able to specify more recent transparency reforms, laws, or institutional initiatives than their counterparts from Kenya and Nigeria.

Most interviewees emphasized that any positive policy developments were confined to transparency measures and expressed disappointment that these successes had not naturally generated more accountability, echoing findings from recent empirical analyses.³⁹ According to one activist in Kenya, "Everybody focuses on the transparency but then not how that links back to the ability of people to actually . . . hold up policymakers, public officials to account and to actually influence their behavior, their decisions." An activist from Nigeria described his disappointment with the implementation of the country's 2011 FOIA law: "One of the setbacks has been in some cases, government institutions have refused to comply with requests for information. The government has failed to provide a very compelling framework . . . to optimize the value of the FOI law. . . . At the end of the day, transparency may not lead to any concrete outcome if there is impunity." Interviewees also expressed deep frustration over a lack of punishment in what they perceived as clear instances of public corruption. "Our problem is when [movements] call out corruption, the authorities do not act. So guys will step aside, they will be fired and then they come back as politicians. So, a minister is fired . . . and then they come back as a

Organizations and activists that did not receive foreign funding tended to suspect that doing so would shape the kinds of goals they could pursue.

governor.” Workshop participants in Nigeria expressed disgust over the appointment of Abdurashheed Maina to a position in the interior ministry despite there being a warrant for his arrest related to a pension fraud scheme. Their Kenyan counterparts were deeply frustrated by the election of Ann Mumbi Waiguru as governor of Kirinyaga County not long after she was forced to resign from a cabinet ministry following a large corruption scandal.

In regard to the role of foreign funding, most participants and interviewees felt that such support constrained the types of short-term or intermediate objectives and aims that activists could pursue. One interviewee in Nigeria whose organization received funding from foreign sources explained that

some donors that come in and they already have their preconceived ideas of how things will go. And they try and force you down that route. . . . They don't allow you to help guide or shape interventions. . . . At times it can give one a reputational risk amongst colleagues in country, among beneficiaries or partners, government partners.” Another interviewee, in Kenya, remarked that foreign donors impose “these constraints of ‘this is what you can do, this is how far you can go’ and the like . . . with main donor funding, whatever you have written in your proposal that is what you have to do . . . whoever funds you, you work per their booklet.

Other respondents focused less on whether donors directly influenced goal selection and more on how reporting requirements compelled them to alter their work and approach. According to a key informant from Nigeria,

Donor funding [is] largely what we call log-frame driven. If we do this, we will achieve this and then we will make this impact and therefore you have already defined a line of activities, that you are actually going to carry out to achieve the result. . . . It is too straight jacketed and issues around struggles for public accountability and transparency [are] not a linear process.

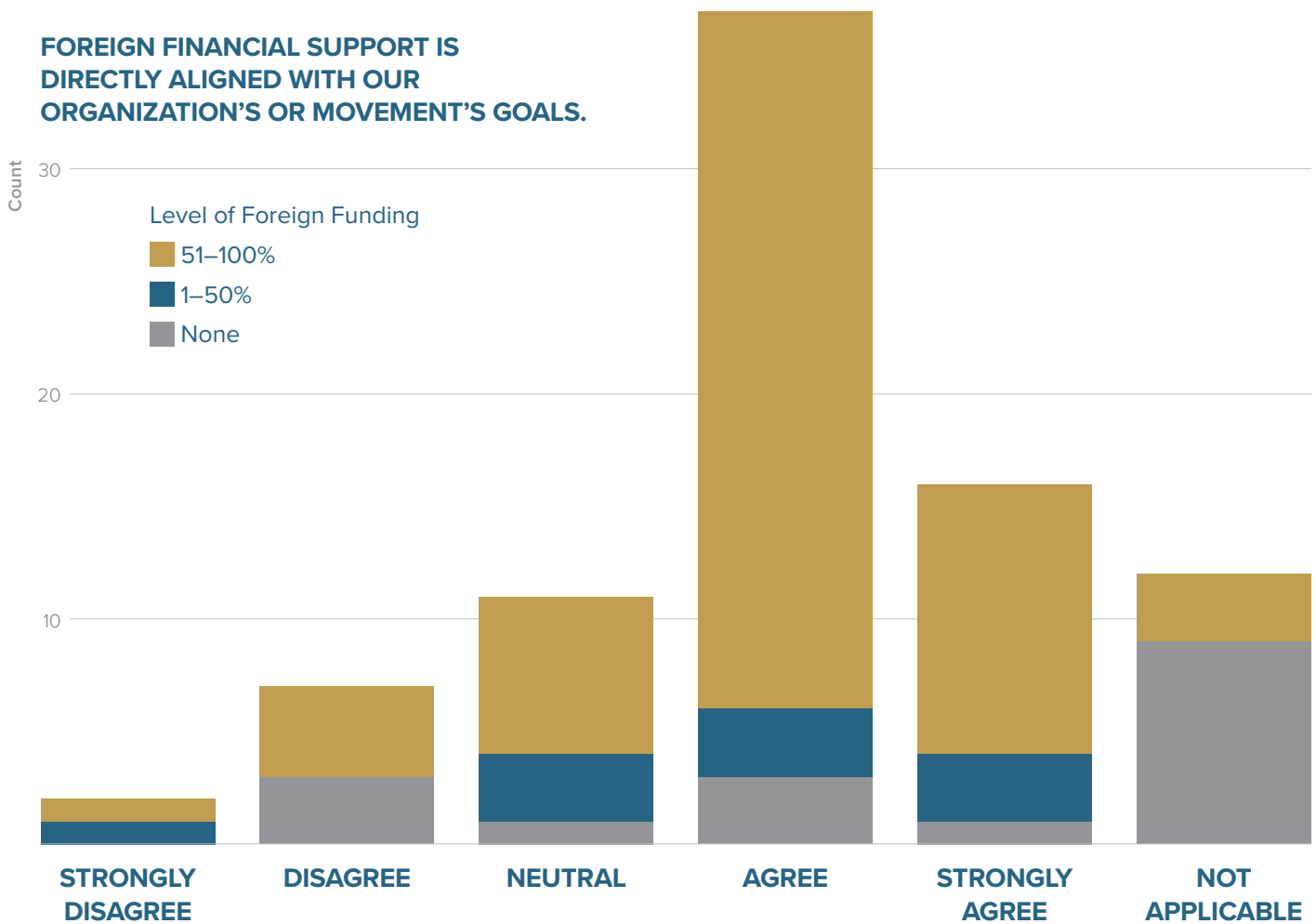
A Kenyan activist pointed out that such programming and reporting procedures were inimical to the nature of social movement mobilization:

This field that I am working with, especially movement building is not, at least the people I have spoken to, it's not part of their [foreign donor] language. It's there, they are saying you know, movements need to be supported and that kind of thing, but . . . the procedure . . . [and] their mentality is still programming . . . you spend too much time pushing paper rather than doing the actual work that needs to be done.

Organizations and activists that did not receive foreign funding tended to suspect that doing so would shape the kinds of goals they could pursue. An independent activist in Kenya explained it this way: “You will find that they will want to fund you and [tell you to] do something on homosexuality. They interfere with your autonomy [and] your belief system. They do whatever, so they drive an agenda.” A member of a Nigerian activist network that considered and then consciously eschewed foreign funding explained that “to collect money from anybody and [you will] be subjected to the whims and caprices of that person.” Regardless of whether they were activists or representatives of advocacy organizations, workshop participants and interviewees consistently characterized such funding as directly constraining or reshaping their goals and aims.

Still, many organizations continued to accept and pursue foreign grants for their work, and many had developed methods of coping with donor influences. Specifically, some highlighted the opportunities for being selective in the grants one pursued. This required having a clear vision and strategy, however. “We choose to look at donor funding positively and try to align donor support to our strategic plan, so that we are able to sustain our strategic objectives and not to get into funding that will move us away,” a representative

Figure 5. Does Foreign Financial Support Align with Activist's Goals?

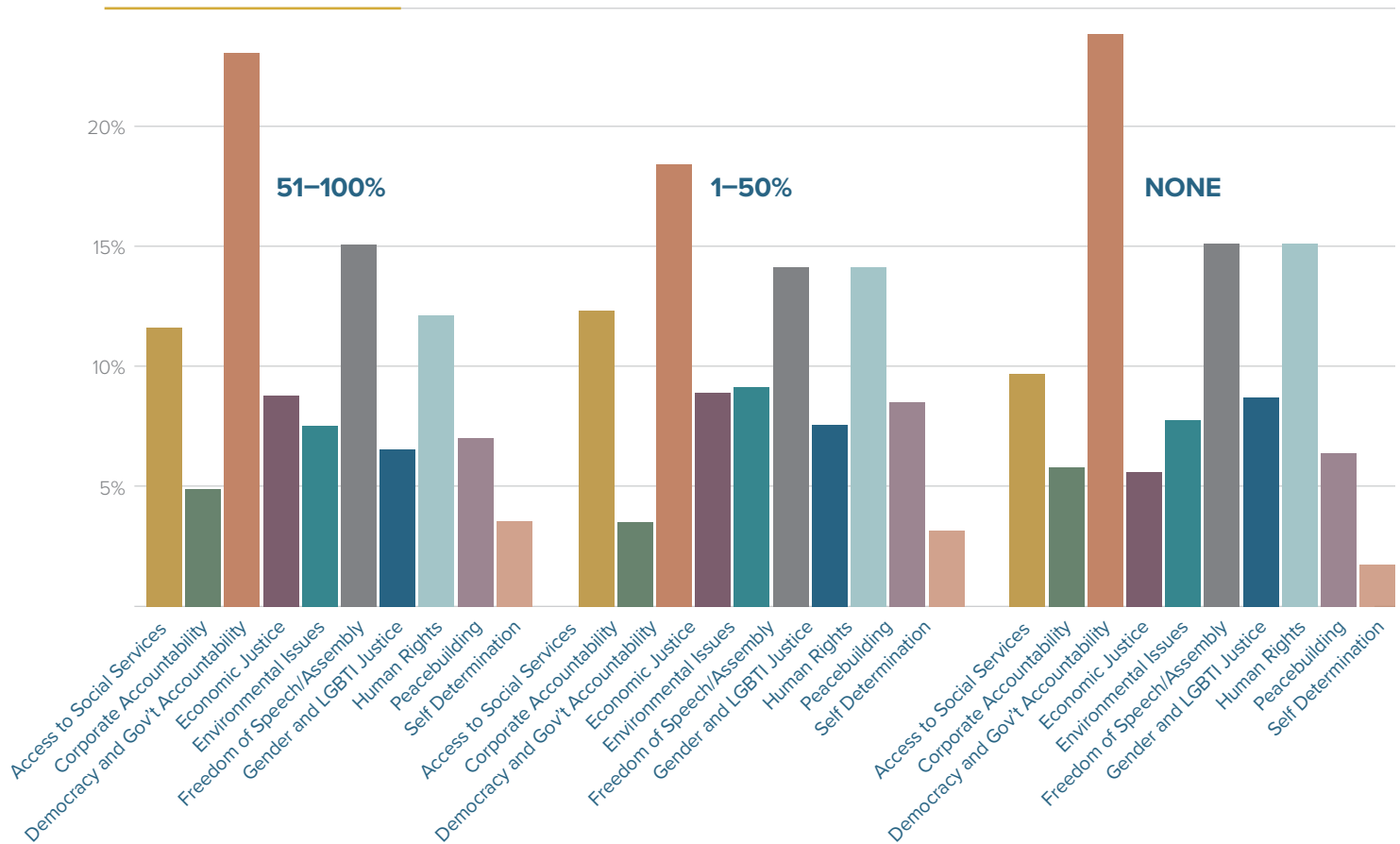


from an organization in Kenya explained. In Nigeria, one activist explained that his organization was always “very conscious where we collect money. . . . If that money would undermine the effectiveness of the work we want to do, we will not take it.”

Surprisingly, criticisms of donor funding as overly meddlesome and interventionist contradicted a much more positive outlook that participants and interviewees expressed in our formal written questionnaire and in other available survey data. Responses to a question about whether foreign funding aligned with respondents’ organizational or movement goals were affirmative, though perhaps not emphatically so (see figure 5). This may reflect the ability of some respondents to navigate toward foreign funders that support

their vision and strategic outlook. Recent survey data, conducted by the movement-building organization Rhize, on whether funding influenced how recipient activists and organizations shaped their work was revealing. In 2017, Rhize commissioned a survey of more than eleven hundred self-described activists in ten countries.⁴⁰ Among the questions they asked were what issue area activists focused on and what proportion of their annual budget was funded from foreign sources. Regarding issue area, respondents were permitted to make more than one selection. In a cross tabulation of frequency of selections made with the level of funding they received, no strong relationship emerges (see figure 6). Based on the characterizations from interviewees and workshop participants, one might expect that activists who do not draw on

Figure 6. Issue Area Selected by Proportion of Annual Budget Funded from Foreign Sources



Source: Author's compilation based on "Understanding Activism" survey data.

Note: Figure should be read as three separate plots for each level of foreign funding. Each bar represents the proportion that an issue is selected of all selections made within that subset of foreign funding level. For instance, among the activists who drew no funding from foreign sources, roughly 23 percent of all issue area selections were Democracy and Government Accountability. In the survey, respondents were able to make multiple selections.

foreign funding would gravitate to different goals and issues than those organizations and activists that rely heavily on it, but no such clustering emerges. By and large, survey respondents appear to associate themselves with similar issues regardless. Activists who drew exclusively from domestic resources identified with government accountability issues as frequently as those who relied extensively on foreign funding. This discrepancy between these survey results and how interviewees and workshop participants characterize the influence of foreign funding may be due to the broad nature of the survey questions or the non-random sample of respondents, but it may also reveal that foreign donors' influence over the aims and goals of recipients is weaker than commonly perceived.

TACTICS AND ACTIVITIES

Social movements use a variety of tactics and activities to advance their goals. Through large-scale public events that attract popular participation and media attention, they can seek to broaden societal support for their outlook and vision. Through institutional channels, they can draw on the repertoires of direct advocacy or litigation and legal mechanisms to initiate or implement state reforms. Protests and other forms of disruptive mass action can also pressure targets and opponents to accommodate a social movement's preferences. Many tactics are possible, and during workshop discussions and interviews it became clear that provision of foreign funding and training appeared to influence which ones were used.

Several trends stood out. First, foreign-funded organizations were much more likely to emphasize information campaigns, whether mass marketing efforts or face-to-face town hall-style events, both as a routine activity and for their effectiveness. In Nigeria, a representative from one organization noted that “one of the most effective [tactics] is media work. I think their impact [that of movement organizations and activists] is much more felt, or much more significant in terms of media.” An activist from an organization that is primarily foreign funded agreed, detailing the logic behind a focus on radio advertisements and distribution of stickers, pamphlets, and mass marketing materials:

The background of our program is media and information. A lot of the work that we do whether it's in the area of good governance or in the area of promoting accountability, it's focused on the media strategy. . . . Information awareness is key. It's central to the work that we do. We believe that the more people who are informed about the programs and policies, the more people who will take advantage of these policies and the more effective [they are].

Online messaging was also a centerpiece for funded groups, as an activist in Kenya explained: “Digital activism [is our most commonly used tactic]. Before I came here this morning, I was tweeting about corruption in government, tomorrow I will tweet about it. It is actually very easy to do and it's very reactionary [provocative].”

Second, foreign-funded organizations and activists also detailed how they often combine a variety of approaches in their work. Some conduct detailed research on corruption issues, generating data and publishing related analysis while engaging in direct lobbying of government officials and pursuing action through the courts, though these seemed to be somewhat more rare. “Providing legal support and training activists are used less often. Organizing meetings and working with government officials and institutions is used more often. And mass messaging, too,” a Ukrainian activist explained. Another stated that “one of the most popular [tactics], [in addition to] making publications of regional researches in

these [transparency and accountability] spheres, is legal support and consultations.” A recurring though not uniform theme among funded groups was greater comfort with and positivity toward direct engagement with the government. In Kenya, one activist explained that “our most frequently used [activity] is direct engagement with government and our social media.” Another activist in Ukraine listed an array of activities that his organization engaged in: “public meetings, organizations of public events, mass actions and coordination meetings with political powers. I mean in my advocacy activity I decided to not go the way of traditional civic activists who don't want to have anything [in] common with politicians.” For some, this was the most likely way to have any positive impact: “If we're talking about transparency and accountability, then, unfortunately, the only tactics here [are] to select the target which is at least a little interested in changes on its territory. . . . So the best tactic is to choose the city or target of influence which wants to be influenced. Otherwise nothing is going to work, unfortunately,” an activist in Ukraine who received foreign funding recounted.

Relatedly, foreign-funded organizations betrayed a lack of comfort with organizing protests and direct action. In Kenya, a representative from one such organization explained: “We have done a couple of demonstrations. It is not our forte. . . . You might demonstrate but maybe the problem is that the parliamentary committee doesn't understand the issue.” A Ukrainian activist also said that protests and demonstrations were not a part of their organization's formal repertoire: “Each of us participated in nonviolent actions, but I can't say it was the organization's activity.” Overall, foreign-funded organizations appeared to draw more on information and mass messaging efforts that sought to broaden societal support for their transparency and accountability agenda while engaging through institutional procedures to build genuine reform traction. Mass demonstrations, whether meant to be disruptive or merely to mobilize support, were less common.

Participants and interviewees who did not receive foreign

This divergence in tactics between foreign-funded and domestically funded movement actors reflected debates about the merits of “professionalization” and when to work constructively with government and when to draw on more pressure-oriented tactics.

funding largely agreed with this. Many also discussed their use of information campaigns and digital activism or direct advocacy. Some emphasized their ability to mobilize mass action as their comparative advantage as well as the tactic most available due to a lack of capacity and competency. A Ukrainian labor activist explained it this way:

There are two competing types [of activities]. People argue about which is more effective. One is lobbying of interest by the experts in the Parliament and other governmental bodies or grassroots organizations [are the other type]. This is a NGOs activity too, considering my own experience, as they try to organize street actions quite regularly. But this activity is a bit imitative, simulative. Because they have a very low potential to mobilize people . . . This looks quite pitiful. . . . I mean, it is better to have these five activists in front of [parliament] than to have none. I mean, this only gives them an additional lever of influence, an additional argument in their lobbying campaign, on press conferences, on some activities they are using, which are less public. Concerning [my organization], this public component of grassroots movement counts more. I mean street protests and strikes that are its elements too. This becomes [our] main element of pressure, which relies on the potential to mobilize people, the potential [for organizations like ours] are trying to preserve and enlarge by any means.

Another Ukrainian activist who did not receive foreign funding agreed, describing his most commonly used tactic as “the organization of public events—pickets, going to the court buildings too.” When asked if he considered alternative activities or tactics, he said,

Of course we have. In particular, there are court reforms concerned with the protection of public interests and other legal means. But to use this, we need assistance, financing. To work on this in a systematic way, to choose a direction, to engage a specialist that will help to file lawsuits. You also have to pay a court fee to file. Today, this is not a small sum of money. We have considered this, but we have not done this yet.

This divergence in tactics between foreign-funded

and domestically funded movement actors reflected debates about the merits of “professionalization” and when to work constructively with government and when to draw on more pressure-oriented tactics. On the one hand, foreign funding often helped produce greater professionalization within a movement organization. In response to a question about the most positive change that has resulted as a consequence of foreign funding, one Kenyan activist explained that “Growth in regard to information and knowledge on how to become more professional, so how to ‘professionalize a movement’ or ‘professionalize a cause,’ so that has happened.” In Nigeria, one founder of an anti-corruption organization detailed how funding allowed him to streamline and systematize his operations:

Before [we received a foreign grant], we were not registered. We were a loose group, a loose movement, we were not institutionalized, [we] were just passionate young Nigerians that wanted change . . . So when we got this money, we now found a need to institutionalize ourselves and sort of organize ourselves more. So that was when we now looked at registering the organization, and also by putting our books in order. . . . And [the first grant] sustained us, and for one year when we submitted our report, both financial and programmatic, [our funder] gave us [a larger grant] which now included salary for two people at first. So that also helped us to recruit more hands and expand our campaign, but until that time we were still focused on working in rural communities.

The activist later explained how the funding combined with a management training program furthered this professionalization:

After the training we now understood that there are different phases of skills in an organization. Inasmuch as I'm an activist, I'm also an entrepreneur because I manage an organization as a CEO. . . . I'm a natural activist so for me I think if you ask me, as I was telling my colleague earlier, in my next life I

would come as an accountant and as a lawyer because one thing that has really bummed me out is accounting. . . . So I think for me [the skills I want are] understanding practically the laws of the land and also financial skills.

Several actors and organizations that did not benefit from foreign funding craved this kind of training and professionalization. A Ukrainian activist explained that a foreign grant "would definitely give us the possibility of moving in a professional direction, making [our work] less of a hobby. . . . The result would be more investigations on corruption, more monitoring work. Because it would allow us to have more working hands, more real staff, making it a real job, it would affect our professionalism, as well as our communication."

Another representative from an unfunded organization in Ukraine explained,

Speaking about small organizations that are limited in human resources, in villages and small towns, there are not enough people to build [the] financial part of the organization and make audits. That's why they [activists] need to work with donors directly. . . . Because serious funds demand such things. We have never had a bookkeeper in our organization over the last 7 years. I didn't receive a single penny for myself. I mean I don't earn money working in this organization. It's a voluntary work.

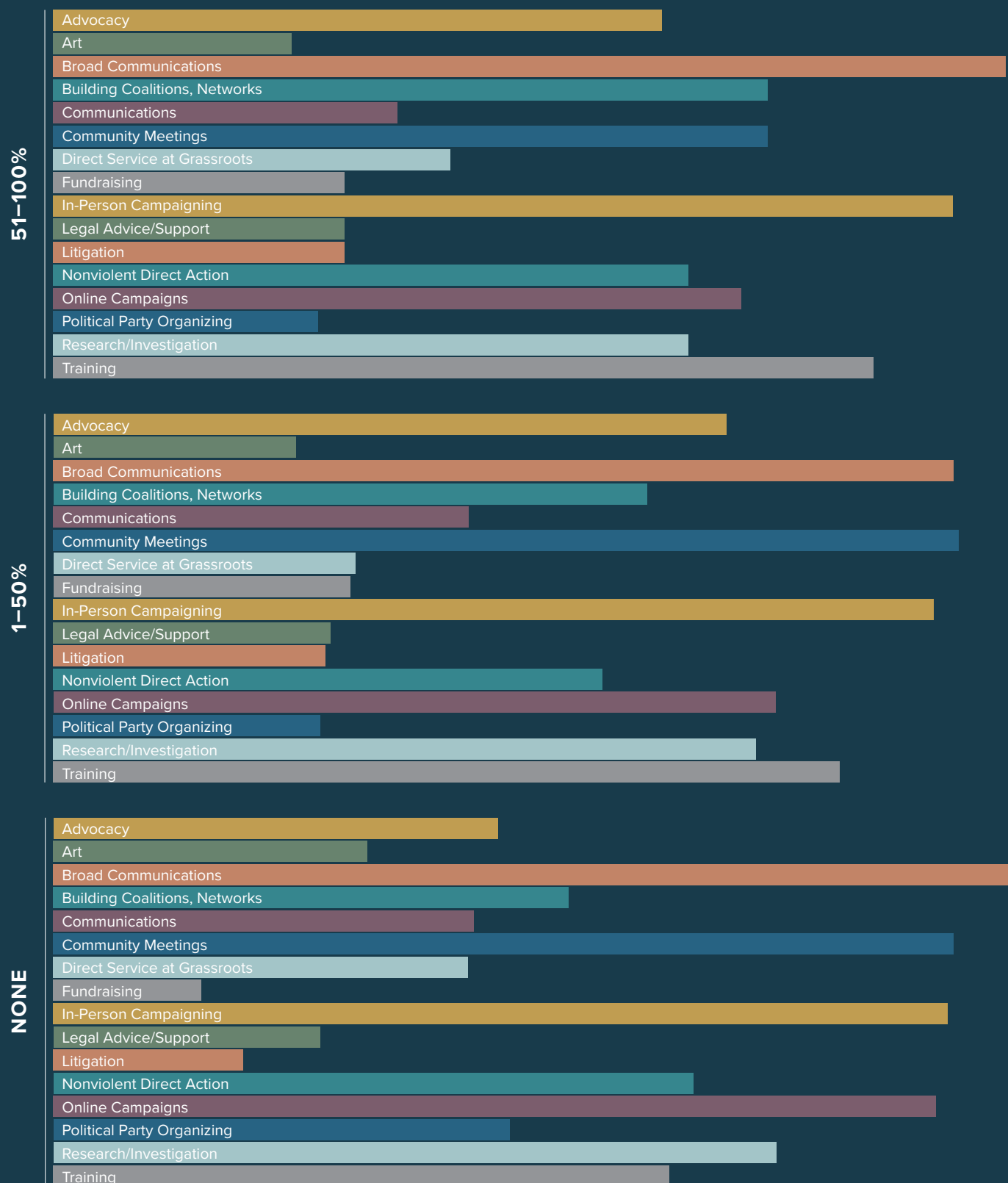
However, as mentioned, along with professionalization comes a suite of tactics that emphasize more institutionalized approaches instead of forms of pressure such as mass protest and nonviolent action. To some donors, this result is not unintentional. The UK Department for International Development's State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI) in Nigeria sought to change its approach to supporting advocacy and civil society organizations to avoid previous programs that "had the effect of locking stakeholders into fixed adversarial positions, which reduces rather than enhances real accountabilities."⁴¹ SAVI has demonstrated real impacts on disability rights, climate change policies, and infrastructure contract implementation

initiatives, but these gains may be due to a selection effect built into the programming. The issues were chosen because they were "politically tractable," which may mean that they were accountability measures that did not directly threaten the interests of key political or other leads. When it comes to combating corruption or enhancing accountability, however, many reforms do just that. And under such scenarios, resistance by powerful actors is more likely, and social movement repertoires that emphasize persuasion and institutional approaches may have less of an impact. If foreign funding and professionalization promotes a reliance on institutionalized approaches, then SMOs and activists may find themselves unable to advance the transparency and accountability policy changes they desire.

As in the relationship between foreign funding and the stated goals or issue areas of an activist, a divergence emerged between what was said in interviews and workshops and the results of relevant survey data analysis. In addition to asking what issue areas activists focused on, the 2017 "Understanding Activism" survey of self-described activists by Rhize also asked what types of tactics they employed. Figure 7 plots the respondents' selection by the level of funding received from foreign sources. The most commonly used tactic was "broad communications," potentially a reflection on the use of information campaigns, followed by community meetings. Forms of online digital activism were nearly as common as offline messaging. In-person campaigning and research or investigations were also frequently selected. More technical and potentially costly tactics, such as litigation or legal support, were somewhat less common. However, no activities or methods were heavily favored overall, though respondents were permitted to make multiple selections.

Nor did the receipt of foreign funding appear to dramatically alter how movement actors operated. The difference in the selection of direct government advocacy between activists who drew no support from foreign sources and those who relied heavily on such foreign funding was not significant. Other tactics, such as

Figure 7. Tactics/Activities Selected by Proportion of Annual Budget Funded from Foreign Sources



Source: Author's compilation based on "Understanding Activism" survey data.

Note: Figure should be read as three separate plots for each level of foreign funding. Each bar represents the proportion that an issue is selected of all selections made within that subset of foreign funding level. Respondents were able to make multiple selections.

litigation and training other activists, did appear to be more common among foreign-funded groups, but not especially so. Likewise, the selection of nonviolent action tactics, such as protests, was slightly less common among foreign-funded organizations and activists than among unfunded actors, but the difference is negligible and does not appear to be meaningful. This challenges the expectations of the NGO-ization argument, which criticizes professionalized actors for relying excessively on institutionalized approaches over more pressure-oriented and disruptive tactics.

Despite the broad similarities in selection of tactics across foreign-funded and unfunded actors, how these tactics are applied and how effective or expansive they are may differ in ways that these questionnaire responses do not capture. The nature of the question, which focuses on how a tactic fits within the overall portfolio of repertoires used by foreign-funded and domestically funded actors, may overlook nuances of how tactics are applied. For instance, a funded organization may engage in direct advocacy as much as unfunded groups, but may do so in a more sophisticated or influential way. Likewise, unfunded actors may be able to attract more support and participation in their nonviolent action events than funded organizations and activists.

MOBILIZATION

The influence of social movements is often assumed to be a function of mobilization, specifically, the ability to generate active and voluntary citizen participation. To understand how this is influenced by foreign funding, workshops and interviews targeted whether and how various organizations and activists engaged fellow compatriots in their transparency and accountability initiatives and activities. Of particular interest was whether these activists believed that the acceptance of foreign funding and training compromised their legitimacy or bona fides among prospective domestic constituents.

Some acknowledged that receiving foreign funding did pose a challenge. “As an activist I get a lot of bashing

online that I am being paid by *wazungus*, which is white people, to destabilize the government . . . In the public eye, yes, it kind of has a negative impact because [people make] like we are trying to advance somebody else’s agenda,” one Kenyan interviewee who received foreign funding explained. Another in Kenya who did not receive foreign funding concurred: “I think that would detract from how they see me. Because they [prospective constituents] see me as the courageous person who can fight for their interests without foreign funding or support from whatever. Now, once I start to begin [to accept] this kind of money, they say ‘he is being paid to do that by whoever, so he is not really genuine, he is just an agent.’”

A local activist in Ukraine also shared this sense: “A local deputy or a member of parliament says ‘look, this activist is financed by [George] Soros’—in a live broadcast or whatever—then the listeners will think about what was behind such actions. They might repeat after the TV that it was financed by Soros, but they don’t understand why it [the accusation] is being done.” A respondent from a Nigerian network of activists similarly explained that a conscious decision had been made to eschew donations of funding, particularly from foreign sources, to ensure broad-based public support and involvement in their activities. “We need to be able to be independent in the real sense of it. And we needed to be able to use this platform [of] being independent to build public capital.”

Many other respondents, however, explained that receiving foreign funding did not always generate legitimacy deficits for recipients. Some felt that most of the claims about foreign-funded groups serving as “foreign agents” were largely ignored by prospective constituents. “Look,” a Ukrainian activist said, “I’ve heard some allegations and they are often made by some politicians like ‘you receive money and advocate some unclear . . .’ and they go into conspiracy theories. But such statements are perceived as marginal by the society. . . . But anyhow, society doesn’t perceive such accusations.” A Kenyan activist also thought these

accusations were losing their effectiveness. “It had surprisingly a lot of traction . . . [but] people have gotten smarter and seen these [accusations] are just, you know, a bunch of bots and you know people who actually don’t have much credibility.” When asked whether he perceived any risks to accepting foreign funding, a Ukrainian activist who relied on domestic resources said, “I don’t see any other risks, either reputational or any others. Well, a small percentage of people might call you a *grant-eater*. But most people take it well.”

Other activists explained that foreign funding was actually central to their ability to act autonomously and be perceived as genuine promoters of transparency and accountability in the public interest. In Nigeria, one activist said, “For us to maintain independence, we had to take the international support. Because the day we take money from government, that’s the day we lose our sense of purpose or anything, all the credibility will be gone.” This individual also did not think that they could accept funds from Nigerian individuals or private foundations: “Even our board will not allow us to take from any Nigerian philanthropic organization, except if [the organization or individual] is open to answer how he got his money, his wealth.” A Nigerian working for an international organization concurred, explaining that “foreign funding or support even brings credibility because if you look around, internal [domestic] support largely comes with so many interests, and Nigerians are suspicious of those kinds of things.”

The most significant threat to the perceived legitimacy of an activist or organization was not the acceptance of foreign funding, but that such funds would change the recipient or bear no positive change. “I think the biggest challenge with foreign assistance, foreign support in this way is when donor priorities change. . . . We delegitimize ourselves when we are not consistent with . . . how we conduct ourselves. Whether we were using foreign or local funding, it would be the same. So I would say it’s how we work that determines our legitimacy.” A Ukrainian activist from an organization funded

by foreign sources agreed: “The effect of foreign money, I think, it doesn’t matter. . . . We take money according to the technical tasks which we have. We look for a task that would correspond to our goals. So the source of the money doesn’t matter in this case.” A Ukrainian activist who did not rely on foreign funding similarly attributed any reputational or legitimacy problems associated with foreign funding to the influence they may have over how a recipient operated: “If the strategy and goals of the organization are similar to [the funder’s] goals then it doesn’t really matter.” In Nigeria, a representative from an advocacy organization explained that some activists are able to manage the “reputational risks” associated with changes in foreign donor priorities and preferences by being more selective: “When you learn to manage [the risks] properly, and you determine who you work with, and who you take support from.” Another foreign-funded activist in Nigeria explained that his organization was always “very conscious where we collect money If that money would undermine the effectiveness of the work we want to do, we will not take it.” Presumably, many activists and organizations may not have the luxury of choosing the source of foreign support, but this may, for more experienced and competitive organizations, be a viable countermeasure to any legitimacy deficits that accrue to shifts in donor priorities.

Despite the general conclusion that foreign funding posed a manageable threat to the legitimacy and credibility of recipient organizations and activists, many workshop participants and interviewees still described mobilization of citizens as a rare component of foreign-funded activists. To the extent that foreign funding contributed to the professionalization of recipients, it often was also associated with forms of activism that required less broad-based mass participation. According to a foreign-funded activist in Ukraine, “Unfortunately, there are a lot of examples when certain campaigns are being realized and they even might be successful but they are not based on involving citizensBecause organizations are usually represented for [a]

CONNECTING WITH THE GRASSROOTS IN KENYA

Do organizations connect with and mobilize citizens? Does accepting funding from foreign sources negatively influence citizens' perceptions of transparency and accountability activists? Our ability to answer these questions is somewhat limited by biases inherent in our data. After all, activists and advocacy organizations may not be the best judges of how popular they are or how their constituents view them. Fortunately, in the course of our research in summer 2018, we were generously offered the opportunity to add several questions to one wave of the Sauti za Wananchia (Voice of Citizens) longitudinal survey conducted in Kenya by Twaweza. The survey includes a nationally representative sample of two thousand participants and so broadly reflects popular views in Kenya.

Concerns are increasing that civil society organizations (CSOs), particularly professionalized and formal advocacy and other nongovernmental organizations, may be disconnected from citizens. To gauge the extent of this sentiment, we inserted a question in the survey that asked whether leaders in civil society organizations put enough effort into including grassroots participation. The results were mixed. Of the 1,680 respondents who completed the survey, about 46 percent characterized the outreach efforts of CSOs as inadequate. A majority, however, either thought CSOs did include adequate levels of grassroots participation in their work (30 percent) or had no firm opinion on the matter (23 percent). Part of the difference in views may be explained by exposure. To determine how familiar respondents were with the civil society sector, they were asked to identify by name as many CSOs they knew that were operating in a different county in Kenya. Those who could name two or more were about 50 percent more likely to feel that grassroots participation was adequate than those who could not. Overall, Kenyans seem somewhat split on whether the organizations within civil society are inclusive enough of average citizens. Although CSOs might reach out to the grassroots better, they do not appear to be viewed overwhelmingly as aloof.

Nor does it appear that Kenyans' perceptions of CSOs are swayed by foreign funding. We added an additional question in the survey asking whether citizens viewed positively or negatively those organizations in civil society that received foreign funding. A large majority, 62 percent, reported that whether a CSO received funding from a foreign source had no effect on their opinion of the organization. In fact, 25 percent of all respondents said that the receipt of foreign funding would positively influence their views of a CSO, whereas only 10 percent held a negative view. These views did not display a strong relationship with whether respondents believed grassroots participation in CSOs was adequate. Among the respondents who held a negative view, the number of those who considered grassroots participation adequate (or had no opinion) was roughly the same as those who considered it inadequate. By contrast, Kenyans who viewed foreign-funded CSOs positively appeared more likely to believe that they are adequately inclusive. That is, foreign funding does not appear to have a strong relationship with whether Kenyans perceive CSOs to be inclusive.

In sum, foreign funding to CSOs does not significantly inhibit CSO legitimacy and connection with citizens. Many Kenyans do not appear to be dissatisfied or feel excluded from CSO work, though large numbers still express an interest in greater engagement and outreach.

certain circle of people and not based on real membership. I am not speaking of formal membership and membership cards . . . Unfortunately, it's a problem in Ukraine." A representative from a foreign-funded advocacy organization in Kenya also explained how their focus on transparency and accountability did not involve extensive outreach to fellow citizens.

It's just very difficult to remain committed to constituents whose problems are immediate. And a lot of us are on, we are working on kind of ideological principles, policy principles that set a foundation for the realization of those needs eventually. So the community they are saying, "I don't have water today," we as an [advocacy] institution have spent sleepless nights and now have an Act, but that hasn't brought water. . . . So the big challenge of transparency and accountability is that it doesn't deliver services immediately. It creates the enabling environment, and there will always be that disconnect. . . . It's in our new strategic approach where we have said, "okay, look we need to build advocacy capacity within communities for sustainability." Because we will leave this space, who will agitate for these issues?

COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Collaboration across SMOs and activists is often depicted as a central component of effectiveness. The ability to build coalitions permits scaling up local efforts, merging of complementary skills and specializations, and creating redundancies to dampen government interference.⁴² To some extent, a social movement may not exist without some form of collaboration, if only tacit. Social movements are change-oriented ideologies shared by a number of individuals and organizations, many of which work toward this shared vision but often in unstructured ways. In this respect, some form of weak, unplanned cooperation is always taking place.

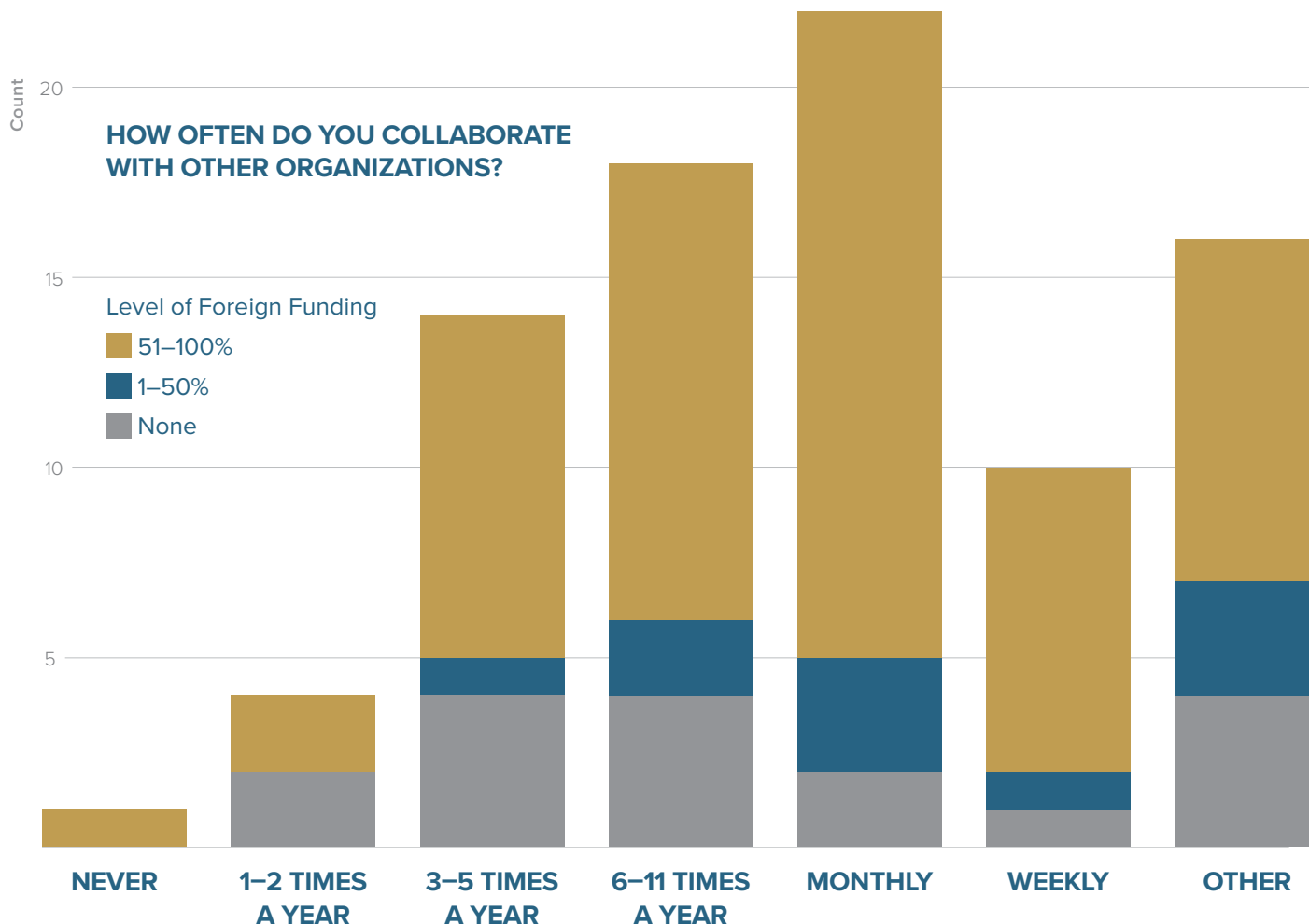
Inter-organizational collaboration is not always natural, however. Some organizations may disagree on the finer points of policy. Others may be more comfortable with tactics that focus on direct action or militancy. For example, just several years after the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine, many new activists

and organizations, such as the Reanimation Package of Reforms that emerged from that protest wave, found themselves criticized publicly as increasingly part of the establishment and dismissive of "results-oriented activists."⁴³ Their routine engagement with government officials and the foreign diplomatic corps has been rebuked as evidence that they are out of touch with the grass roots. Still, even if organizations share the same goals, competencies, and strategies, they can find themselves competing for the same limited attention of constituents and financial resources.⁴⁴ In the case of foreign support from donor governments or private foundations, many SMOs and activists may be pursuing the same grant opportunities from the same funders.

Based on their questionnaire responses, participants and interviewees reported routine engagement and collaboration with their peers. Most did so on a monthly basis or even more frequently, and few appear to operate wholly independently. Funding from foreign donors also seems to stimulate some collaboration. Among those participants and respondents who already received donor funding, most agreed that such collaboration was furthered by foreign financial support. Moreover, organizations that did not receive foreign funding seem to report slightly less frequent collaboration with peers than those organizations that did (see figure 8). In general, the questionnaire responses suggest that funding does stimulate some greater collaboration among organization and activists, but primarily among the already funded groups.

During the workshop and interviews, a more complicated depiction of inter-organizational collaboration emerged. Although collaboration, partnerships, and networking were framed as common occurrences, they took on a two-tiered quality. On one level, organizations and activists that received foreign funding and training primarily explained that these were regular features of their work. "We are constantly cooperating with a wide range of organizations [around the country]," an activist from a foreign-funded organization in Ukraine said. These collaborations were driven by two factors.

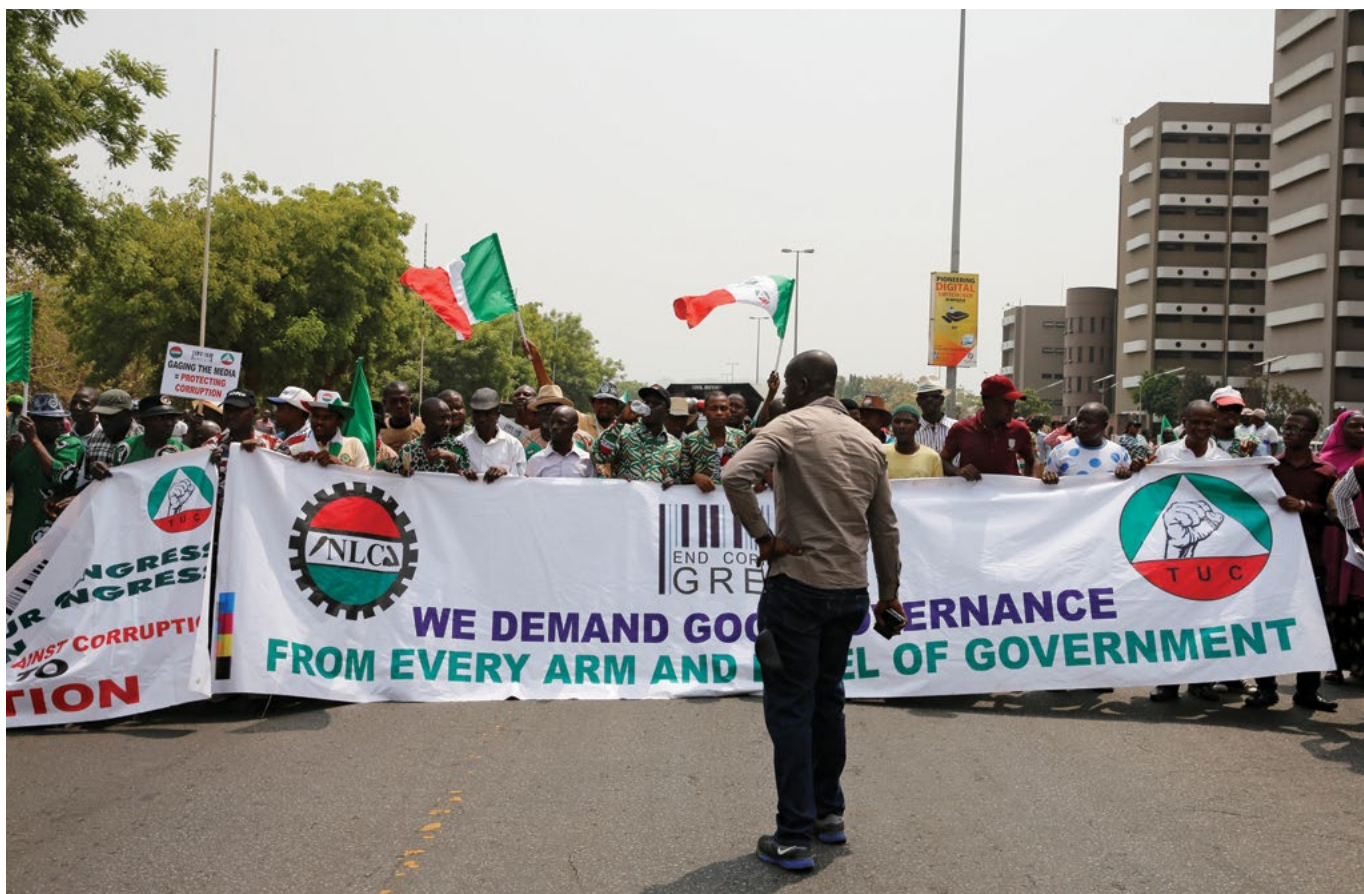
Figure 8. Participants' Views of Collaboration



First, an interest in partnering with peers that provided complementary but not redundant skills and competencies was common. “You don’t want to reinvent the wheel but you do want to be able to leverage on existing success of organizations who can also leverage on you,” a respondent from Nigeria observed. In Kenya, an activist explained that collaborations occur when “organizations look for what they don’t have in us.” Speaking about one initiative related to judicial monitoring, a representative of a foreign-funded organization in Ukraine recounted that “[A partner organization] provided us with expert help in the legal sphere. We provided help and funded independent observers for court hearings. So it was kind of a symbiosis. And [organization name] did the front end, the website, and so on. . . . We share our methodology of

monitoring, which we have developed over time, and other organizations do the same in their field.”

Shared foreign donors was the second driver of collaboration. Although some pairing of complementary skill sets naturally spurred collaboration, other respondents explained that donors had an expectation that collaboration would take place. One respondent from an organization in Nigeria explained that “if it’s possible to collaborate with other organizations, the more the merrier for us. But for this specific issue, working in the area of accountability, the push came from the funders. They encouraged a lot of organizations to.” This sentiment was echoed by a former senior civil servant in Nigeria who said, “My suspicion is that the organizations probably have common donors. So they



Protesters demand good governance during a march in Abuja, Nigeria, in February 2017. (Photo by Afolabi Sotunde/Reuters)

enjoy support from the same donors who would then inevitably say, ‘why don’t you collaborate.’” However, collaboration was more likely to break down and competition to emerge when organizations that shared the same competencies began working together for the same donor. The duplication of skills created tension, especially when it came time to report to foreign funders. According to an activist in Nigeria, “There may just be competition, people try to maintain their territory . . . particularly since, if you’re referring to organizations that are being supported by the same funders, people want to look good or impress the funders, so they try not to open up [to each other] as they would ordinarily do if they didn’t have the same funder.”

The second tier of inter-organizational collaboration featured more competitive dynamics, particularly from the perspective of organizations and activists

not receiving foreign funding. In Kenya, one organization that received only minimal foreign assistance explained that “the organizations that are [foreign] funded, most of the organizations come to hijack our programs, and then they go and claim . . . it’s theirs, they have done it, it’s their success story. So, at times I tell them don’t come and steal my success story in the community, go and print it somewhere, so that you can get a lot of funding.” A respondent from a funded organization in Kenya agreed:

Most of the reports that end up on desks in very big organizations are reports that come from the grassroots. If you look at a report like for instance on the extra-judicial killings in a place like [omitted], who were the people putting together the data? . . . So there is a class issue already . . . and this is because the money for the grassroots people to even access donor funding, there is this, there is a civil society that is between them and the donor.

Unable to directly access foreign funding compels newer, less sophisticated, or more independent organizations and activists to partner with foreign-funded organizations just to sustain themselves. A forced collaboration emerges.

This depiction of collaboration between funded and unfunded groups as somewhat exploitative and class based was not uncommon. Many activists and organizations not receiving foreign support saw it as emblematic of a larger problem of exclusivity among funded organizations. “Unfortunately, it’s a common practice in Ukraine that mostly the same organizations receive grants every time, not 100 percent of them but mostly the same. Young organizations often lose heart when they realize this. And also experienced organizations when they realize they [unfunded organizations] can only be partners [with foreign-funded organizations] and that it’s pretty difficult to become an applicant [for foreign funding].” A respondent from an organization in Nigeria that only recently began receiving foreign funding appeared to corroborate this notion of an inner circle of donors that can be difficult to breach as an outsider. Referring specifically to a preference of foreign private foundation over bilateral or multilateral donors, the respondent explained that “one advantage [of private funders] is they have like a circle of donors. We found out that they usually meet annually, they have their conference, and the advantage is they share your work beyond you[r] even looking for an international platform . . . and also they find opportunities for you to come and speak . . . Two of [my colleagues] will be going to Europe next month.” A foreign-funded activist in Kenya echoed a similar dynamic: “The people who fund you or finance you open up their networks also so you are able to access that.”

The challenge for many organizations that do not receive funding is that they are not structured in ways that meet donor eligibility requirements. According to a staff member from a funded organization in Kenya,

You find that [foreign donors] fund a lot of big organizations but they don’t look for smaller people that they can work with, like an institution in Mandera, or Marsabit, or

Lamu. And the other thing is because [foreign donors] have to work within particular structures: you must be registered, you must have this certificate and that certificate. People who could actually do much more work are not able to get that [foreign funding] opportunity.

A respondent from an unfunded organization in Kenya echoed this concern: “[Foreign donors] are looking for organizations who are able to manage—and I say ‘manage’ because the first thing they will ask you is ‘can we see your last financial audit account?’ Where will grassroots women’s movements like us get such, you know?” In Ukraine, the lament was similar: “We have [sought out foreign grants]. But ours is a small organization, and usually it is rare that small organizations without funding history receive grants.”

These requirements have consequences for collaboration. Unable to directly access foreign funding compels newer, less sophisticated, or more independent organizations and activists to partner with foreign-funded organizations just to sustain themselves. A forced collaboration emerges. When grant proposals are rejected, “We have to knock on doors, civil society organization doors, and ask for support because they are funded. That keeps us going.” In Ukraine, these experiences appear to feed resentments. Many independent organizations and activists uncharitably refer to many of the routinely foreign-funded organizations as grant eaters. In Kenya, several respondents framed this competitive dynamic as Kilimani versus Mashinani, the former an upscale neighborhood in Nairobi where some prominent NGOs are based, and the latter a Swahili word meaning provincial or up-country to refer to unfunded grassroots actors.

Practical and Research Implications



Perceiving them to have unique reform leverage, policymakers, government program officers, and private foundations are all increasingly inclined to engage with and support the work of social movements in developing country contexts. By providing these actors with funding and training support, such foreign donors are aiming to supplement the positive policy influence of these influential organizations and grassroots activists. A focus on transparency and accountability issues facilitates understanding how social movement actors experience such support; specifically, how it shapes the goals they set, the tactics they apply, how and whether they mobilize support among their compatriots, and how they collaborate with peers. Because this study drew on participatory workshops and in-depth interviews to explore these themes, it is unable to identify whether foreign support to social movement actors produces policy reforms. However, the research does point to considerations related to these themes that may influence donor decision making, which in turn could be assessed through more systematic evaluation.

Broadly speaking, foreign support is almost universally perceived as extended with substantial strings attached. Both domestically financed activists as well as those that draw heavily from foreign funding sources perceive significant influence from foreign donors on both their objectives and their tactics. This influence is often depicted as a major constraint on the ability of activists to adapt to their environment and maximize their impact. Reinforcing the notion that foreign funding influences tactics, a review of foreign-funded and

domestic-funded organizations highlighted substantial differences in their tactical repertoires. The former seemingly drew more on direct advocacy, data analytics, and litigation and other legal approaches; the latter spent more time on community engagement and mobilizing popular participation in demonstrations. That foreign support may be influencing recipients is potentially critical. Such support is extended because its recipients are believed to have unique abilities to read the political and social landscape in their contexts and work accordingly to advance positive policy reforms. If foreign funding redirects recipients from their preferred courses of action, it may directly undermine its own goals.

However, the perceptions that foreign funding was substantially influencing how recipients operated were not necessarily supported by available survey data. Responses to a nonrandom survey of activists in ten countries showed fewer differences in the issue-area focus and activities of foreign- and domestically funded activists. Some organizations and activists also discussed coping strategies they use to avoid being overly swayed by foreign donors, including being selective about the source of funding and aligning grant applications with existing strategic plans. From the donor's perspective, this may be encouraging in that their current approaches to extending foreign funding and training may be less burdensome or interventionist than might be perceived. Still, increasing the periods of performance, reducing the reporting and contractual obligations, and expanding the proportion of "core" support that recipients can expend may increase both



Artist Dariya Marchenko works on a portrait—which she calls "The Face of Corruption"—of then Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko in March 2019. (Photo by Valentyn Ogirenko/Reuters)

the satisfaction of social movement actors as well as their ability to respond to unexpected opportunities or innovate more generally.

In discussions with workshop participants and interviewees about how foreign support might influence their legitimacy and credibility among their prospective constituents, many also saw such challenges as minimal or manageable. Some recounted that foreign funding may strengthen their legitimacy. Survey data from Kenya suggests that few citizens there had a negative perception of civil society organizations that accepted funding from foreign sources. Again, the influence policymakers and program officers have on the social movement actors they seek to support may be more limited than is sometimes feared, at least in contexts such as Nigeria, Kenya, and Ukraine.

Interview and workshop responses indicate that foreign support may be a source of division and stratification among activists. Many activists find that the biggest obstacle to obtaining foreign funding is earning the first grant, after which such organizations and activists are able to join a somewhat exclusive network where support is self-perpetuating. Many independent grassroots actors, however, feel that they are excluded from this network and unable to meet the criteria to obtain such grants. As a result, they usually become subgrantees to foreign-funded grants, effectively performing the work of the grant but not able to directly access the benefactors. Depending on one's point of view, this may be an effective division of labor: more established organizations take on the risk of major grants and oversee their execution; and more nimble and newer activists conduct some of the related on-the-ground work. Indeed,

being subgrantees may enable such activists to engage in the more contentious and agitative work that established organizations tend to eschew. Many of the grassroots activists interviewed, however, did not see it this way. References to “grant eaters” and “cartels of civil society” may indicate that such dynamics could inhibit coalition building and wider partnerships across activists and organizations. If donors and program officers wish to enable the broadest coalition building possibilities, they may need to overcome some of this acrimony. Setting aside more small grants with limited eligibility requirements to which only new activists and organizations are eligible may help support the growth of newer and smaller activists as well as allay any divisions with more established organizations. Training programs and workshops that bring together more established organizations and newer activists may also foster opportunities to build bridges without forcing partnerships.

These findings and the broad propositions they suggest point to several potential approaches to more systematically evaluate the effects of foreign funding or training on recipients as well as the impact of foreign-funded social movement actors on transparency and accountability more generally. First, the influence of foreign funding on recipients’ behavior, such as tactics and collaboration with peers, could be assessed in an assessment of foreign grant competition outcomes. The approach could compare only winners with near winners, such as applicants whose proposals advanced to a late stage in the assessment process but ultimately were excluded due to limited resources rather than a lack of eligibility or capabilities. Changes in post-award organizational forms and behaviors could then be modeled, potentially with a regression discontinuity design. The viability of this approach may be contingent on how many applications are received and how awards are determined, among other considerations.

In regard to exploring the impact that foreign-funded social movement actors have on how transparent and

accountable their host governments are, both quantitative and comparative research approaches are options. Specifically, the devolution and decentralization of authority in Nigeria, Kenya, and Ukraine may open opportunities for comparison of the degree of transparency and accountability of state-, county-, or local-level authorities and whether these correlate with the extent of activism and activist organizations operating within those administrative units. Now that aid data is increasingly geocoded, potential associations between variation in transparency and accountability at the subnational levels with funding directed at nongovernmental and civil society may also be estimable. A focus on the subnational level provides the ability to exclude country-specific factors that may influence how activists operate or how different national governments respond to such activism. It poses challenges as well, however. One major difficulty may be obtaining accurate measures of the level of activism or number of activist organizations operating within each administrative unit. National authorities often require and maintain records of public-benefit organizations, and some national statistical bureaus also try to capture the number of nongovernmental entities operating within a country, but this data is not always entirely reliable.⁴⁵ Intermediary organizations, or NGOs based in capital cities that serve as grant makers for community-level activists, may be another source of systematic or representative information on the location and number of activists or activist organizations within a country.

A comparative approach might analyze the successful adoption of transparency or accountability legislation or related reforms in a country with past failures. For instance, the passage or failure of access to information legislation could be analyzed as a most-similar style case study, whether between two countries or over time within one country. Similar analysis of controversial so-called NGO bills that introduce new bureaucratic burdens on activist and advocacy organizations could also be conducted in an attempt to analyze whether and how social movement actors are

Greater care in supporting these actors and more in-depth analysis of how such support influences their effectiveness can ensure that social movement activists remain major drivers of positive change.

influencing transparency and accountability reforms. Alternatively, detailed process tracing of specific legislation could reveal the specific ways that social movement actors contributed to the content or passage of major reforms. In Nigeria, more than ten years passed between the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act and its adoption in 2011. In-depth analysis of the origin of the bill's content, how it changed over time, and how reluctant supporters were persuaded to back it might identify when social movement actors were able to drive the process and when other forces may have been behind such reforms.

Whether from bilateral government agencies, multilateral institutions, or private donors, extensive funding and training are likely to continue to be directed at various organizations and activists to support their efforts to reform their political institutions. As observed in many countries, these activists have been able to advance major reforms related to anti-corruption, transparency, or other governance matters. Greater care in supporting these actors and more in-depth analysis of how such support influences their effectiveness can ensure that social movement activists remain major drivers of positive change.

Notes



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accountability is more expansive and involves “a relationship between the power-holder (account-provider) and the delegator (account-demander). There are four elements to this accountability relationship: setting standards, getting information about actions, making judgments about appropriateness, and sanctioning unsatisfactory performance” (Joshi, “Do They Work,” 531). Technically, the terms encompass more than anti-corruption policy such as institutional negligence and poor performance, but they are obviously deeply intertwined and frequently used synonymously.

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Corruption is among the greatest challenges affecting countries worldwide. Its persistence has broad implications for economic development as well as for political stability and violent conflict. Anti-corruption initiatives by foreign donors tend to follow one of two general approaches. One is to strengthen state institutions. A slightly different but often complementary approach is to support the independent efforts of citizens and civil society to advance transparency and accountability reforms from the bottom up. This report draws on the findings of a series of participatory workshops and in-depth interviews with social movement organizations and actors in three countries—Kenya, Nigeria, and Ukraine—to discuss and better understand how such actors experience foreign support and the implications of these findings.

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